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# General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

*Official Records*

**102**nd plenary meeting
Monday, 13 June 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 4**

**Election of the President of the General Assembly**

**Election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixtieth session**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, as amended by Assembly resolution 56/509 of 8 July 2002, I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixtieth session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138 of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session should be elected from among the Western European and other States.

In that connection, I was informed by the Chairman of the Western European and other States for the month of November 2004 that the group has endorsed the Ambassador of Sweden to the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, for the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly for the sixtieth session.

It extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson. His election to the presidency of the General Assembly constitutes a recognition of Sweden's consistent and effective endeavours to implement the principles and purposes of the United Nations. In personal terms, Mr. Eliasson's election is a well deserved outcome of a long diplomatic and political career, at both the national and the international levels.

Mr. Jan Eliasson is most familiar with the United Nations: from 1988 to 1992 he served as his country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and during that time acted, inter alia, as the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Iran and Iraq. In 1990-1991 he served as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council before being appointed, in 1992, as the first Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

At a time when the United Nations is in a crucial phase of its history, Mr. Eliasson's long experience and his diplomatic skill will be very useful as he leads the work of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session to a successful outcome. It will be his task to guide the implementation of the tasks undertaken at the fifty-ninth session, particularly with regard to a number of aspects of the ongoing process of reform.

I am mindful of the fact that the job that awaits him will not be easy and will require tireless

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commitment. In a spirit of cooperation and openness, I am ready to make use of the transitional period to assist the new President in getting off to an excellent start. I am convinced that we will work together harmoniously during the transitional period, as is necessary during the lead-up to the sixtieth session. That period is especially crucial since, in my draft resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, submitted to Member States on 12 June, I proposed that Presidents of the Assembly be elected at least six months in advance.

I wish Mr. Eliasson every success.

It is my pleasure now to invite His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly for the sixtieth session, to take the floor.

**Mr. Eliasson** (Sweden): I am touched and honoured to be elected President of the General Assembly for its sixtieth session.

I am deeply grateful for the support given to Sweden's candidature by the States members of our regional group and by all members of the Assembly today. Their support takes on special significance for my country since the legendary Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld was born in Jönköping, Sweden, in July 100 years ago.

At the outset, let me pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his untiring and dedicated work and for his courage and vision in presenting us, the Member States, with his report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), the most comprehensive and cohesive proposal for strengthening the United Nations since the birth of the Organization.

The President of the General Assembly has now, after consultations with Member States, transformed that proposal into a draft declaration for us to consider and for our heads of State or Government to adopt at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to take place from 14 to 16 September. It is incumbent upon all of us to deal with this proposed draft declaration thoroughly, creatively and with a commitment to accept global responsibility. The wise and decisive leadership of President Ping — at many crossroads and with many difficult choices, as we know — has been and will be key to the success of that highly important September meeting, which will be followed with keen interest by all the peoples of the world.

Today, we are facing a test of multilateralism. Will we develop the concepts and methods to deal with global problems in this age of rapid globalization? Will we be able to make the United Nations system a more effective actor on the world scene? Those are major, even historic, tasks for our peoples, societies and Governments, as well as for all of us here at the United Nations; we, the practitioners of multilateral diplomacy.

Our main task now is to accept, and live up to, the triple challenges of development, security and human rights. The three are intertwined and affect and reinforce one another.

Let us remember the calls of the Preamble of the Charter "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours" and "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security", as well as "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples". I continue to lie impressed with the wisdom and farsightedness of the framers of the Charter. Let us commit ourselves to work in their spirit and to be inspired by that great document.

But let us also work with our eyes directed to the realities of this world. Let us place human beings and the real problems at the centre and organize ourselves accordingly. Let us always keep in mind the words "We the peoples" in the Preamble of the Charter.

The litmus test and the measuring rod for United Nations reforms must be the difference they make for people and crisis areas around the world: for the starving child, the AIDS-stricken mother, the war-torn country, the desperate refugee, the oppressed and neglected and the polluted river. Here let me add that the lack of clean water for billions of people around the world is unacceptable and should be seriously and rapidly dealt with: a glass of clean water is a luxury to far too many people in the world. We need to work on that very concrete issue. And further, let us not forget the struggling and unselfish humanitarian workers of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, as well as the United Nations and regional peacekeepers. What I would call field tests — reality tests — should be applied to all reform proposals.

I have strong personal memories from my time as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and from many natural and man-made disasters around the world. The nightmare of Somalia in 1992 and 1993 will forever remind me of the urgent need for prevention, for early action and for effectively dealing with civil wars and the tormenting ethnic and religious conflicts. We cannot, after Cambodia, after Rwanda, after Srebrenica and after Darfur, continue merely to say "never again" without seriously undermining the moral authority of the United Nations and its Charter.

In my presidency I will also be guided by values and principles which are pillars of Sweden's foreign policy: belief in multilateral cooperation, the imperative of prevention, respect for the rule of law and human rights, solidarity with the poor and the persecuted, and concern for the rights of women, for the children of the world and their future, and indeed, for the health of planet Earth. Those aspirations, I know, are shared by people and nations in all regions of the world.

I strongly believe that regional organizations and regional cooperation should be strengthened and energized as a result of the reform efforts in the United Nations. We know that regional arrangements form an integral part of the Charter, and they must be important elements in a necessary international division of labour in this time of many pressing issues and demands around the world.

The United Nations is not a panacea or a universal cure. It reflects the collective political will of Member States and their interest in strengthening the multilateral system. Effective international norms and structures should be seen to be in every nation's national interest. That is the goal we have to aim for.

In order to achieve this, we must offer international solutions and methods which correspond to the needs of today's world: fighting poverty, diseases, organized crime, trafficking, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and environmental degradation, as well as preventing and resolving conflicts and stopping mass killing, torture and abuse. For this, we have to sharpen the tools of the United Nations and develop concepts which reflect our preparedness to face and, I stress, act on those fundamental challenges.

This is the essence of the reform project of the United Nations: building a United Nations which effectively and legitimately responds to the urgent needs around the world and adds value to our work for security, prosperity and a life in dignity for all. Making real progress to reach that end would be our most important contribution to the historic test of multilateralism which we are now facing.

If we at the United Nations pass that test, we will not only enhance the prospects for effective international cooperation. We will also be able to deal more effectively with widening gaps and dangerous imbalances in the world. And, on a deeper level, I daresay we could instil hope and belief in the future in a world of growing fear and growing suspicion. We must mobilize political will to change negative trends and to prevent polarization and pessimism. And we must realize that we have the opportunity and the capacity to do so at this moment of history.

In a spirit of dialogue and transparency, I will as President of the sixtieth session work together with all members in this common endeavour. Let us bring out the full potential of this central body, the General Assembly, and let us together build a strengthened United Nations.

Finally, in our daily work, with all of us — members of the Assembly in particular — toiling on United Nations reform in the committees, working groups, meeting rooms and Secretariat offices, let us be inspired by Dag Hammarskjöld's words in his book *Markings* — or, in direct and more accurate translation from the Swedish, *Waymarks* — on the need for vision and the need for a long-term perspective: "Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step; only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find his right road."

I am grateful for the Assembly's confidence in electing me as President of its next session.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I wish to inform members that there will be an opportunity to extend congratulations to President-elect Eliasson in the Indonesian Lounge following the adjournment of this meeting.

I call now on the representative of Nigeria, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

**Mr. Adekanye** (Nigeria): On behalf of the Group of African States, I have the honour to convey our warm congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, Ambassador Extraordinary and

Plenipotentiary of Sweden to the United States of America, on his election as President of the General Assembly for its sixtieth session.

Ambassador Eliasson's election comes during a period of intense consultations between and among Member States on reform of the Organization. We are pleased to note that the new President brings to his high office a wealth of experience, diplomatic skill and intimate knowledge of the Organization. The African Group is therefore confident that during his tenure he will steer the affairs of the General Assembly in a manner deserving of the appreciation of all Member States.

I wish to assure the new President of the support and cooperation of the African Group throughout the sixtieth session.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

**Mr. Say** (Cambodia): It is my great honour, on behalf of the Group of Asian States, to express our most sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, Ambassador of Sweden to the United States, on his election to the high office of President of the General Assembly for its sixtieth session. His impressive experience and wide professional achievements in the fields of international diplomacy and politics will without doubt be of great value in guiding Member States through important and complex issues before them and in maintaining our momentum so that we can attain the main objective of this body, namely long-term peace, security and prosperity.

We would like to assure the President-elect that the Asian Group will render active support and cooperation as he discharges the responsibilities of his high office.

We would like also to express our very high appreciation and profound gratitude to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, for his extraordinary commitment in fulfilling his duties as President of the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and for the excellent guidance he has provided Member States, qualities that characterized his able presidency. His extensive skills, leadership and dedication have been essential for the achievement of the successful outcome of the session during the Assembly's most crucial period to date. More emphasis this year was placed on Member States and the United Nations itself embarking on a highly ambitious reform agenda encompassing all major aspects of international diplomacy. Again, we thank Mr. Ping for his outstanding presidency.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

**Mr. Bródi** (Hungary): On behalf of the States of the Eastern European Group, I would like to express our most sincere congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador Jan Eliasson of Sweden on his election as President of the General Assembly for its sixtieth session. We are confident that, with his immense experience in the highest diplomatic posts, his various international assignments and his long association with the United Nations, the newly elected President will provide the leadership and commitment needed at this crucial time in the history of the Organization. We are confident that Ambassador Eliasson will be an able leader of this body and that his help and guidance will contribute to the advancement of the reform of the United Nations. I would like to assure him of the full support of our group in the many demanding tasks that will lie before him during the forthcoming session.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your tireless efforts and commitment during the current, fifty-ninth, session. It is our firm belief that it would not have been possible to carry forward the reform deliberations in recent months without your experience and your wise and vigorous leadership. Your skilful guidance has largely contributed to the progress made so far in bringing the Organization closer to a successful summit and a fruitful sixtieth session.

On this occasion, we are encouraged by the pledge of the newly elected President to continue on the same course during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. We can assure him that the Group of Eastern European States will continue to give our full support to the United Nations reform process and to the strengthening of the Organization's many organs and bodies and the improvement of their working methods.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Suriname, who will speak

on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

**Ms. Mac Intosh** (Suriname): I am honoured to speak today on behalf of the States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group as we elect the President of the General Assembly for the upcoming sixtieth session. It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the members of the group, to extend sincere congratulations to the President-elect for the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, Ambassador of Sweden to the United States.

We are convinced that Mr. Eliasson will bring a wealth of diplomatic and political experience to the presidency, which we are confident will enable him to fulfil the expectations attached to his election and provide the leadership and commitment needed at this critical juncture in the history of this world body.

I wish to assure the President-elect that, in the discharge of his duties as President of the Assembly for its sixtieth session, he will be able to count on the dedicated support of the States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group; we wish him every success in his new mission.

It would be remiss of me, Mr. President, while congratulating your successor, not to acknowledge and pay tribute to your effective and dedicated leadership of the current session and to your commitment in ensuring a successful outcome for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, which will precede the sixtieth session.

Members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States are keenly aware of the importance of the United Nations as the supreme multilateral institution, and we look forward, in cooperation with the rest of the membership, to carrying forward the process of restoring the role and authority envisaged for it in the Charter in order to create a more effective and efficient Organization better able to address the many challenges our world is facing today.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

**Mr. İlkin** (Turkey): As Chair of the Group of Western and other States, I would like to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, Ambassador of Sweden to the United States, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly for its sixtieth session. Ambassador Eliasson assumes his post at a time when the United Nations is at a critical crossroads, and we believe that his long and distinguished career, together with his extensive knowledge of the United Nations, will help us through the important tasks of the coming General Assembly session. Mr. Eliasson's election is yet another indication of the success of Swedish diplomacy in the service of the United Nations and of universal peace and development.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping for the strong determination and perseverance he has been showing during his presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, which has been a remarkably demanding one. His tireless efforts and illuminating guidance during this critical phase of the reform process are indeed commendable.

We look forward to continuing, in the coming months, our efforts under Mr. Ping's presidency to advance the work of the Organization and to promote the reform process, leading to the successful conclusion of the High-level Meeting to take place in September.

For the realization of the reforms, the guidance and motivation of our visionary Secretary-General remain equally important.

**Programme of work**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind representatives that consecutive meetings of the six Main Committees, for the election of their respective Chairmen and other members of their Bureaux, will follow immediately after the adjournment of this meeting. Thereafter, the General Assembly will hold its 103rd meeting, to elect the 21 Vice-Presidents of the Assembly for the sixtieth session.

*The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.*